

The Brethren Evangelist.

PUBLISHED AT
THE BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE.

"Let Us go on Unto Perfection."

TERMS, \$1.50
PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

VOLUME IX.

ASHLAND, OHIO, FEBRUARY, 23, 1887.

NUMBER 8.

Christian's Song.

I'm a soldier bound for glory,
I'm a soldier marching on;
Come and hear me tell my story—
All who long in sin have gone.

1 I will tell you what induced me
For the better land to start;
'Twas the Savior's loving-kindness
Overcome and won my heart.

2 When I first with Christ enlisted,
Many said, "He'll turn again;"
But though every day resisted,
In the ranks I still remain.

3 I'm a wonder unto many,
God alone the change hath wrought;
Here I raise my "Ebenzer,"
Either by His help I'm brought.

4 Soon to Jordan's swelling river,
Like a soldier I shall come;
Then I mean to shout salvation,
And go singing glory home.

Here and There.

On Sunday Feb. 6th, at 3 p. m. the funeral of sister Ida May Stifler, wife of Bro. L. C. Stifler, and daughter of Bro. Edward S. Miller, was preached in the first Baptist church in Waterloo, Iowa. The funeral was one among the most largely attended ever held in the city. She died of ceribritis meningitis. She was an exemplary wife, mother, and Christian, and was the third of the membership of Enon church to die since the organization of the congregation. She leaves two children aged one, and two and a half years, both suffering with pneumonia. Brother Stifler has the sympathy of a large circle of friends in this his trying hour, and every thing that can be done to smoothe the rugged way of trial it will be the pleasure of his church and friends to do. Brother and sister Miller were present at the time of Sister Stifler's death and funeral. Miss Lizzie, sister of Bro. Stifler, arrived from Penna., in time for the funeral. She will remain and assist in caring for the motherless children.

Brother John Nicholson is now with the brethren at Falls City, Nebraska, laboring in Word and doctrine; and also attending the meeting of our Nat. Com., relative to our coming convention. He is expected home next week or the week following.

Your correspondent has been the recipient lately of an unusual amount of correspondence requesting information upon the various features of our doctrinal code, and general church discipline. The extended and ill timed discussion, and expression of individual opinion upon the soul sleeping, Lord's Passover, secret society, and open communion questions, has given rise to much misunderstanding and vague uneasiness upon the part of a large class of sincere seekers after truth, and devoted friends of the church. While the discussion, in some respects, has not been without passing interest, in others it has been decidedly harmful.

If the fact of its being but the expression of individual opinion, for which the church is in no way responsible, had been kept in view, the uninitiated would not have been bewildered and misled. During every reform, and in every church, there are persons who hold to views not generally accepted by the bulk of their associates. Due allowance must always be made for this class, and the vehement expression of the personal views of its members must be con-

sidered aside from the settled and recognized doctrines of the general organization.

In the Old Order, the German Baptist and the Brethren churches there is a limited class of individuals who are settled in their convictions that Christ celebrated the Jewish passover on the night of his betrayal, instead of instituting a new and distinct ceremonial allowably composed of different elements to be celebrated at times suited to the will and convenience of the congregation, as is held by the great body of these Christian organizations.

Now, while no one denies these brethren the liberty of personal opinion upon the subject, the advocacy of this their personal opinion must not be mistaken for an exposition of the doctrine of the church. Here is where the difficulty arises. Because a few have advocated the view that Christ celebrated the legal passover on the night of his betrayal the suspicion has gone abroad that the church is responsibly committed to the doctrine while nothing is more foreign to the truth.

While a few have advocated the doctrine of unrestricted open communion their expressions and essays carry with them only the weight of individual authority and individual responsibility. The Brethren church as an organization is committed to nothing of the kind. Nor is it the advocate of what is known as close communion. There are exceedingly few congregations that would tolerate an unrestricted invitation, upon the part of an officiating minister, to "all who feel they are the Lord's children" to come forward and commune. Nor would a minister be approved who would insist upon a contracted practice of close communion.

The doctrine of the general church upon the subject is that no one, minister, elder or deacon, has a right to invite or encourage any one to commune with us except such as have been baptized into the one body, by the one spirit, and the one baptism. If persons not thus qualified, knowing our attitude, do upon their own responsibility and examination approach the Lord's table, we will neither avoid them nor drive them away. If they thus come and eat and drink worthily the blessing is theirs, it unworthily they eat and drink condemnation to themselves, for themselves, and by themselves, and are therefore individually, and individually alone, responsible. And the general view of the church is, that gospel baptism is only legitimately administered by trine immersion. We are therefore neither an open nor a close communion church. We occupy neutral and, we think, gospel grounds upon the subject.

As relates to secret societies, the Brethren church is doctrinally antagonistic to all oath bound secret associations; and members of such orders are not encouraged in continuing their relations with such oath bound

associations. But all encouragement is to the contrary. The doctrinal motto of the church is drawn from the declaration of the Master "swear not at all" and similar scriptural texts.

In all this it is not the purpose of this paper to express the personal views of its author, but to state the general doctrine of the church so as to relieve our people of the embarrassing position in which some seek to place us through the rather prolific advocacy of personal faith through our church organ—the BRETHREN EVANGELIST.

It has been repeatedly stated through the EVANGELIST that no "one man carries the Brethren church in his vest pocket," and it is to be hoped this rather pungent truth will be kept in view, that what our editor, or another, may assert and advocate as tenable may not be mistaken for an exposition of what is the acknowledged doctrine of the general church. This has been overlooked in the past and hence some have been misled.

We are congregational in government. But congregationalism only relates to those things of business and incidental features of worship that concern the affairs of the local congregation. The apostolic church was congregational but only in such things as mentioned above. In doctrine they were "Catholic." There was but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one spirit, one calling and one hope, and they obeyed from the heart one form of doctrine and but one. When congregationalism extends to the unbridled band of having "forms of doctrine" and more than "one baptism" or words of administration it ceases to be gospel and apostolic. No man, congregation, or men dare institute forms of doctrine or admit the practice of more than one baptism. Bro. A. P. Gibson was correct in his statement in the EVANGELIST of Feb. 2, that when a church "claims the authority to tamper with the ordinances of the Lord's house" it transcends its gospel prerogative and oversteps its congregational rights. This is the doctrine of the Brethren church as a church, as has been voiced by every convention, and every authoritative document ever sent out in which expression was given. But we have no fears of our people "running wild" as long as men sound in the gospel will give force and tone to its teaching. It is probable that a discussion of our doctrinal code will never come up in a general convention. It may not be needed.

S. H. BASHOR.

Myrtle Point Oregon.

Jan. 25, 1887.—At my last writing, I stated we were going to organize a Sunday School. We have organized with 45 scholars and 5 teachers, with your humble servant for superintendent. We hold our meetings in a hall that we have rented until we get our meeting house

done, which, if the Lord permits, will be by the first of May. We are few in number, besides poor, so if there should be any brothers or sisters who feel like helping the Brethren in Oregon to build a house to worship in, it would be received with thankful hearts. If any one wishes to send anything, send it to Thomas Wilson, Myrtle Point, Oregon. He is our treasurer. He will give an account of all money. We are having high waters here at this time. The waters are all over the river bottoms.

We stated in our last that we were going to hold meeting in Coquille City. We did not hold but two meetings on account of a debate going on there; but we will have meeting there once a month.

The brethren are all in good spirits here. We are trying to serve God.

WM. PULLEN.

Huntington, Ind.

Feb. 13.—I am in receipt of a letter, where a friend inquires as to my being dead, or alive. I just reached the 45th anniversary in my life on the 10th inst., and really it affords me pleasure to state, that as the "Outward man grows weaker, the inward man is renewed day by day," so I am happy to state that I am alive bodily and spiritually.

I, like many others in this community, feel that we need the labor of an evangelist. Bro. Summers was to see to us getting some one, and if we don't succeed in the near future, will do what we can by the help of God for our spiritual life, a life that should engage our every effort.

After the services today I had a very pleasant interview with a Conservative sister, with regard to our united efforts in a Sabbath school. We agreed to work together and by our combined strength give the children the benefit of pure Bible doctrine. More of Christ, and less of self, is what our motto should be.

Some of the brethren think that possibly Bro. Jno. H. Worst may pass this way. How is it Bro. John?

There are a number of brethren here that wish to know how the title will be to the College. Will it be clear when the present debt is paid?

R. K. BINKLEY.

Markleysburg, Pa.

Feb. 18.—Elder S. W. Wilt commenced a series of meetings at this place Jan. 27th, which has been attended with so much interest that it is worthy of note. Mr. Wilt's sermons have proven him to be a man possessing a vast amount of scriptural knowledge. While his delivery has not been so eloquent his sound, logical reasoning has not been equaled in our community. He is a strong advocate of experimental religion. In a word he has preached Christ. He has generally been honored with a full house of attentive hearers, anxious to hear the gospel. We have had so much of bap-

tism, feet washing and such externals, that we have become anxious to hear something more pertaining to the eternal. The truth he has preached to us will ring in the ears and hearts of many for time to come.

He announced on Sunday Jan. 3rd, that on Tuesday evening following he would preach a discourse on difference of faith and practice of the Brethren church and the German Baptist church.

Mr. Wilt has made many warm friends during his stay among us, and the good people of Markleysburg will always continue to extend a hearty welcome to him. He has had three or four accessions to the church and the prospects are good for many more. A number have expressed themselves favorable to the church. And Mr. Wilt will no doubt succeed in organizing a society at this place. May God hasten the time when men will examine themselves and try to get the heart right.

J. MATTHEWS.

The Battle of Bunker Hill.

We took up the battle at Bunker Hill, of which Bro. Gordon spoke in a recent issue of the EVANGELIST, where he left off. Brother Gordon had worked up a good interest and one had surrendered before our part of the work began. After we had worked nearly a week we stopped and came home a few days, then went back and resumed the work. By the grace of God, the united efforts of the church—their prayers and songs—and the valuable assistance of brother Fitzgerald, who was present a week during the meeting, we continued through rain and snow, and through mud and dark until 42 precious souls surrendered. The church was full, (sometimes crowded) every evening. The roads were almost impassable sometimes excepting on the pike, and the nights dark, but the folks got there somehow. Nearly all the converts are heads of families. The Brethren have good prospects for the future, they now number nearly 100, and several more virtually said they would unite soon. With the close of this meeting my pastoral work closed at Bunker Hill, and I may soon be better prepared to give more of my attention to the general work.

Brother Fitzgerald will succeed me at Bunker Hill. May God bless brother Fitzgerald and the church that much good may be accomplished through their instrumentality.

J. H. SWIHART.

When we are firmly convinced that what the world needs is some sharp reformation, we ought first to question ourselves how much of the wickedness we see is the world's, and how much of it is only the shadow of ourselves.

A man's world is pretty much what the man himself makes it. Before our world can grow better, we must grow better ourselves; and we never have a right to insist that the world shall purify itself, until we first have done what we could do toward its purification, by taking heed to the correction of our own ways.